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Division of Housing Policy Development

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Susan Bransen, Associate Deputy Director
California Transportation Commission
Garth Hopkins, Supervising Transportation Planner
Caltrans

Linda M. Wheaton

FROM: Linda Wheaton, Assistant Deputy Director
Division of Housing Policy Development

SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Guidelines Update-
Population Estimates**

Attached for your information is a summary of an issue relating to significant differences in population estimates of the Census Bureau (CB) and the Department of Finance (DOF) which we recommend for consideration during the RTP Guidelines update process. As you are aware, population estimates are among the most fundamental data items for the pending RTP updates.

The extent of these differences is of particular concern for updates of growth forecasts prior to the availability of Census 2010 estimates, and underscores the importance of the efforts of the State's Complete Count Committee to ensure a complete population count for the 2010 Census. We have prepared this summary with the Demographic Research Unit of the DOF. Any questions about the population estimates should be directed to Mary Heim, the Chief of Demographic Research at DOF (fimheim@dof.ca.gov).

Attachment

Comparison of Census Bureau & DOF Population Estimates: July 2008¹

The Census Bureau's (CB's) July 2008 estimate for California is 36,756,666. This is 1,391,827 fewer persons, 3.6 percent less than the State's official estimate of 38,148,493, prepared by the Department of Finance's (DOF's) Demographic Research Unit (DRU). This is an unprecedented level of difference between the population estimates of the CB and California's DOF.¹

There are offsetting differences in the population components that result in this discrepancy. The most prominent reason for the discrepancy is the estimation of domestic migration (people moving from state to state). Since the 2000 Census, the Census Bureau estimates a net domestic migration loss of 1,378,706 persons (more Californians who moved out-of-state than those who moved here from other states). The Census Bureau's method matches address and dependents on federal tax returns for tax filers from one year to the next to measure migration.

During the same period, the DOF estimated a net loss of 83,702 domestic migrants from the state. The DOF's method uses the more timely state-to-state exchange of surrendered driver licenses to strengthen the estimates produced by comparing tax returns alone, and also uses current school enrollments to estimate the population under 18. For the past two decennial censuses (1990 and 2000), the DOF's population estimates have proven to be more accurate than the Census Bureau's.

For the 2008 estimate, 111,000 of the discrepancy was due to the final step in the Census Bureau's estimates process that adjusts individual state estimates to sum to the independently estimated U.S. total population.

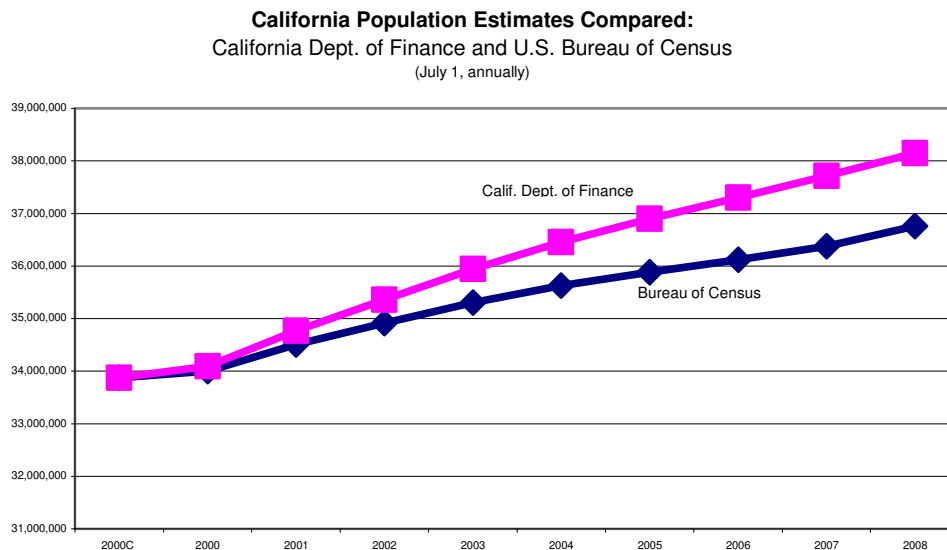
The other population change components were estimated by both sources to be nearly identical. Nearly the entire difference is accounted for in the net out-migration component, estimated by the Census Bureau to be significantly larger. Table 1 (below) and following graph summarize and demonstrate the increasing divergence of the two estimates, from 2000 through 2008 (the 2000C entry represents January 1; all others are for July 1 of that year).

¹ Among other states that develop their own estimates, at least three of them (Florida, Nevada, and New Mexico) report their population estimates are higher than those of the Census Bureau, and believe the difference is attributable to lower net migration assumptions used by the Census Bureau.

Table 1. Annual Population Estimates Comparison

	CB	DOF	DOF (-) BOC	Difference
2000C	33,871,648	33,873,086	1,438	0.00%
2000	33,998,767	34,095,209	96,442	0.28%
2001	34,507,030	34,766,730	259,700	0.75%
2002	34,916,495	35,361,187	444,692	1.27%
2003	35,307,398	35,944,213	636,815	1.80%
2004	35,629,666	36,454,471	824,805	2.31%
2005	35,885,415	36,899,392	1,013,977	2.83%
2006	36,121,296	37,298,417	1,177,121	3.26%
2007	36,377,534	37,712,588	1,335,054	3.67%
2008	36,756,666	38,148,493	1,391,827	3.79%

The graph below displays the widening gap between the two forecasts (note that the population axis begins at 31 million).



The July 2008 California population, as estimated by the DOF is about 3.8% greater than the population estimated by the Census Bureau. The most significant difference in the estimates for individual counties is for Los Angeles County, which is estimated by DOF to have had nearly half a million (485,388) more residents in July 2008 than estimated by the Census Bureau. Other populous counties with significantly smaller population estimates than those of DOF are San Diego (160,405), Orange (114,997), Santa Clara (82,258) and Alameda (74,124). Of the nine counties that were estimated by the Census Bureau to have populations greater than one million in 2008, three counties were estimated by DOF to have populations at least 4.9% greater than reported by Census Bureau: Los Angeles (4.92% greater), Alameda (5.03% greater) and San Diego (5.34% greater).

Only six counties were estimated by the Census Bureau to have greater populations than estimated by the DOF, the largest difference appearing in Placer County, estimated to have an additional 3,195 estimated residents.

While DOF has presented its case supporting its estimates to the CB, the discrepancy won't be resolved until release of the population estimates for the upcoming 2010 Census. These Census Bureau estimates, used first for purposes of determining Congressional representation, are due for States by December 31, 2010 and for sub-state areas (counties) by April 2011.

The differences for the regions encompassed by the State's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are shown in Table 2. The county-level comparisons are shown in Appendix I. The component counties of the MPOs shown above are listed on the attachment (from DOF).

**Table 2. CB and DOF Population Estimates
Re: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)**

July 2008				
MPO	CB	DOF	Difference	Percent
SCAG	17,950,391	18,648,406	698,015	3.9%
MTC (ABAG)	7,046,719	7,341,707	294,988	4.2%
SACOG	2,275,106	2,315,505	40,399	1.8%
SJ Valley (8 MPOs)*	3,862,937	3,974,821	111,884	2.9%
SANDAG	3,001,072	3,161,477	160,405	5.3%
AMBAG	716,074	754,253	38,179	5.3%
Other MPOs, aggregated	1,071,244	1,102,394	31,150	2.9%
ALL MPOs	35,923,543	37,298,563	1,375,020	3.7%
California	36,756,666	38,148,493	1,391,827	3.8%

* SJ Valley MPOs: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare.

Attachment I

	BOC	DOF	Difference	Percent
California	36,756,666	38,148,493	1,391,827	3.8%
Alameda County	1,474,368	1,548,492	74,124	5.0%
Alpine County	1,061	1,202	141	13.3%
Amador County	38,238	37,863	-375	-1.0%
Butte County	220,337	220,769	432	0.2%
Calaveras County	46,843	45,980	-863	-1.8%
Colusa County	21,204	21,848	644	3.0%
Contra Costa County	1,029,703	1,056,477	26,774	2.6%
Del Norte County	29,100	29,401	301	1.0%
El Dorado County	176,075	179,969	3,894	2.2%
Fresno County	909,153	936,828	27,675	3.0%
Glenn County	28,237	29,286	1,049	3.7%
Humboldt County	129,000	132,690	3,690	2.9%
Imperial County	163,972	177,820	13,848	8.4%
Inyo County	17,136	18,011	875	5.1%
Kern County	800,458	823,550	23,092	2.9%
Kings County	149,518	155,024	5,506	3.7%
Lake County	64,866	64,069	-797	-1.2%
Lassen County	34,574	35,763	1,189	3.4%
Los Angeles County	9,862,049	10,347,437	485,388	4.9%
Madera County	148,333	151,938	3,605	2.4%
Marin County	248,794	257,522	8,728	3.5%
Mariposa County	17,976	18,297	321	1.8%
Mendocino County	86,221	90,051	3,830	4.4%
Merced County	246,117	256,114	9,997	4.1%
Modoc County	9,184	9,727	543	5.9%
Mono County	12,774	13,726	952	7.5%
Monterey County	408,238	429,083	20,845	5.1%
Napa County	133,433	137,010	3,577	2.7%
Nevada County	97,118	99,116	1,998	2.1%
Orange County	3,010,759	3,125,756	114,997	3.8%
Placer County	341,945	338,750	-3,195	-0.9%
Plumas County	20,275	20,696	421	2.1%
Riverside County	2,100,516	2,106,328	5,812	0.3%
Sacramento County	1,394,154	1,427,885	33,731	2.4%
San Benito County	54,699	57,629	2,930	5.4%
San Bernardino County	2,015,355	2,060,722	45,367	2.3%
San Diego County	3,001,072	3,161,477	160,405	5.3%
San Francisco County	808,976	842,625	33,649	4.2%
San Joaquin County	672,388	687,044	14,656	2.2%
San Luis Obispo County	265,297	270,046	4,749	1.8%
San Mateo County	712,690	742,251	29,561	4.1%
Santa Barbara County	405,396	429,109	23,713	5.8%
Santa Clara County	1,764,499	1,846,757	82,258	4.7%
Santa Cruz County	253,137	267,541	14,404	5.7%
Shasta County	180,214	182,470	2,256	1.3%
Sierra County	3,263	3,353	90	2.8%
Siskiyou County	44,542	46,017	1,475	3.3%
Solano County	407,515	426,026	18,511	4.5%
Sonoma County	466,741	484,547	17,806	3.8%
Stanislaus County	510,694	526,047	15,353	3.0%
Sutter County	92,207	96,541	4,334	4.7%
Tehama County	61,550	62,466	916	1.5%
Trinity County	14,317	13,898	-419	-2.9%
Tulare County	426,276	438,276	12,000	2.8%
Tuolumne County	55,644	56,470	826	1.5%
Ventura County	797,740	830,343	32,603	4.1%
Yolo County	197,658	200,009	2,351	1.2%
Yuba County	73,067	72,351	-716	-1.0%

ⁱ Description by California Departments of Finance (DOF) and Housing and Community Development (HCD), August 2009.